

MARGARET & MIMI

by

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CHARACTERS

MARGARET	An elderly woman
MIMI	Her friend, also elderly
TOM	Margaret's gardener
NURSE JANE	District nurse
VOICE 1	Anonymous young woman, around eighteen.
VOICE 2 & OLD WOMAN	A witch.

SCENE 1

FX VOICE 1 IN ALL SCENES IS ECHOEY AND HOLLOW SOUNDING.

VOICE 2 IS UN-ECHOING, DEEP AND CLOSE IN OUR EARS.

VOICE 1 [FADE UP.] Help me help me help me help me help me help me help me help me help me....

VOICE 2 Peace.

VOICE 1 Who's that? Who spoke?

VOICE 2 I spoke.

VOICE 1 You. You're the one who left me here.

VOICE 2 Yes.

VOICE 1 It's been a long time.

VOICE 2 Forty years.

VOICE 1 Has it been so long? Help me. Show me the way out.

VOICE 2 Help is at hand.

VOICE 1 Where? Where?

VOICE 2 Listen.

FX FADE UP AN ETHEREAL WIND BLOWING DISTANTLY.

VOICE 1 There's nothing. It's all the same.

Hello? Don't go! Help me!

SCENE 2

FX THE WIND BLOWS STRONGER. IT FADES OUT AND IN. A
CLOCK BEGINS TO TICK SLOWLY. THE WIND TRANSFORMS
INTO SOMEONE BREATHING STEADILY IN THE FOREGROUND.
DISTANTLY, FADE UP A MAN SINGING. THE SINGING COMES
CLOSER AND STOPS. THERE IS THE SQUEAK OF A SCREEN-

DOOR FOLLOWED BY A KNOCK, A SLIGHT PAUSE, AND
ANOTHER DOOR CLICKS OPEN, LETTING IN THE SOUND OF
BIRDS TWITTERING OUTSIDE.

TOM Miss Whitbread?

FX THE BREATHING STOPS.

MARGARET Mm, oh, Tom....Yes?

TOM Sorry to wake you, but I'm just about done.

MARGARET Oh I wasn't....Thank you.

TOM I've just got a load of clippings to take around the back and I'll be off.

MARGARET Right. Thank you Tom. Your cup of tea will be on the window-sill when you come back.

TOM Rightio. And there's a car coming up the drive.

MARGARET Oh, that'll be the district nurse. She's a bit early.

TOM No, it's someone else.

FX THE SCREEN DOOR SQUEAK-SLAMMS AND TOM'S SINGING
STARTS UP AGAIN, FADING INTO THE DISTANCE AS A CAR
PULLS UP OUTSIDE. THERE IS MUSIC PLAYING, WHICH DIES
AS THE ENGINE IS SWITCHED OFF. A CAR DOOR CLICKS OPEN
AND CLOSES WITH A HEARTY CLUNK.

MIMI [BACKGROUND] Oh, this is just gorgeous!

FX THE SCREEN DOOR SQUEAKS OPEN TENTATIVELY.

MARGARET Hello? Can I help you?

MIMI Margaret Whitbread!

MARGARET Yes?

MIMI Don't you know me?

MARGARET I'm sorry...I don't think...

MIMI Let me have a look at you. You see, I can still see it's you! Have I changed that much?

MARGARET Oh, I'm sure you.... I'm just not very....

MIMI Corralimbie Area School 1944 to 1956.

MARGARET Yes?

MIMI Murchison's Finishing School for Young Ladies 1957 to 1959.

MARGARETYes?

MIMI The Husbands-Before-Christmas Competition!

MARGARET Oh.

MIMI Yes! Miriam Wandsworth! I'm Mimi! I'm Mimi!

MARGARET Of course. Mimi. This is...a surprise.

MIMI Of course it's a surprise. Bet you never expected to see me again!

MARGARET No.

MIMI Well, I'm back. And guess what? I'm back for good. I'm a Corralimbie girl again!

MARGARET Indeed? Well, please, come in.

MIMI Of course! We must have some tea. Forty years, close enough! Can you believe it? And do you know, we're the last two. I've been tracking us all down. Would you credit it? All those girls. Dead dead dead. And me not even sixty. I'm so glad I found you.

MARGARET I thought I was the last.

MIMI Well isn't this a bit of luck for both of us then?

Here, I'll make the tea. This is your pot?

FX CLINKING OF CROCKERY, WHOOMF OF A GAS STOVE BEING
LIT, VARIOUS THUMPS AND BUMPS, ALL IN SUCH RAPID
SUCCESSION AS TO BE ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS.

MARGARET Oh, I'll do it.

MIMI [BACKGROUND] No, that's all right. Just show me where the tea is....just this sort is there? I'm a Twinings girl myself. Sit yourself down. It'll be ready in a jiffy.

[FADE UP] Now, was that your husband I saw outside?

MARGARET Tom? Good God, no. He must be ten, fifteen years younger....

MIMI Him? I bet he's not. Handsome fellow though. I like a man that sings.

MARGARET Well he's not my husband.

MIMI Is he married?

MARGARET I don't know.

MIMI Haven't you asked him?

MARGARET Tom's marital status is of no interest to me.

MIMI Well, you must be very happily married.

MARGARET No, I'm not.

MIMI Me neither. Not any more. Never thought I'd be a widow this young, but there you are. You remember my husband, Alistair?

MARGARET Allie's dead?

MIMI Allie? Allie? I never heard him called that.

MARGARET We grew up in the same street. All of us called him that. It was in a song. *Allie ballie, Allie ballie bee, sitting on your mammy's knee.....*

MIMI I never met him till high school. Still, forty years of marriage and I never heard it. Just goes to show.

MARGARET I didn't know he was dead.

MIMI Of course you didn't dear. But I'm fine now. Been nearly two years. Sixty-one years old. Pow. Not much of a track record, this town.

MARGARET How did he die?

MIMI Heart-attack. Playing golf, of all things. Ball hadn't even hit the ground.

FX IN THE BACKGROUND THE KETTLE BEGINS WHISTLING.

MIMI Still, if you're going to go, that's the way to do it. Fresh air, exercise....

MARGARET The kettle's boiling.

MIMI Oh, make mine weak, would you dear? Never been one for strong tea. So, what's happened to your fellow then? Not dead too, surely?

MARGARET [BACKGROUND] What fellow?

MIMI Your husband.

FX CUPS AND SAUCERS BEING SETTLED ON THE TABLE. THEN
THE POURING OF THE TEA, FIRST ONE CUP, THEN THE
OTHER.

MARGARET I've never had a husband.

MIMI What, never?

MARGARET No, never.

MIMI Oh you poor thing. I'm sorry. I don't mean to....but never? I couldn't imagine.....

MARGARET For God's sake, it's not that bad. It has its compensations.

MIMI [GIGGLING] Well you wicked thing. I'd never have expected it of you.

MARGARET What?

MIMI Oh come on, Margaret. We're not too old to talk about sex are we?

MARGARET I wasn't talking about sex.

MIMI What do you mean then?

MARGARET Well, freedom, peace and quiet, my own house...

MIMI Absolutely. The freedom to have gentlemen calling in the peace and quiet of your own home.

MARGARET Not for me.

MIMI Oh, go on. Some at least.

MARGARET No. None.

MIMI None! Nobody has none.

MARGARET Well I do.

MIMI Are you saying you've never....

MARGARET Some more tea?

MIMI But I remember scores of fellows hunting you down.

MARGARET You do not. Who could you possibly remember?

MIMI Well, Andrew Hardy for one. And that red-haired boy, what was his name? Kevin....Kevin...

MARGARET Neither of those boys came within spitting distance of me. And just as well, as I'd have spat on them.

MIMI There were others. Digby Grayston, Simon Cooper. That Italian lad, Nick....whatsis was very keen.

MARGARET That's enough, Mimi. You're making it up.

MIMI No I'm not. I was always jealous of the attention you got.

MARGARET Jealous!

MIMI They were always sniffing around.

MARGARET There was never anybody, Mimi!

MIMI There were hundreds!

MARGARET As a matter of fact, there was one, only one, and you....he wasn't available. I really don't care for reminiscences, Mimi.

MIMI I can't believe it. Are you saying you've only ever had sex with one man, and that was....how many years ago?

MARGARET I didn't say I had sex with him at all, Mimi.

MIMI Get away! Are...? Have you ever had sex?

MARGARET For God's sake...

MIMI Well, have you?

MARGARET Why on earth should it be of interest to you?

MIMI You were beautiful, Margaret. You could have had anyone you wanted.

MARGARET I didn't get the one I wanted.

MIMI So you have never had sex.

MARGARET That's enough Mimi.

MIMI In forty years?

MARGARET I'm warning you.

MIMI You haven't though?

MARGARET No.

Can we talk about something else now?

FX FADE UP TOM SINGING IN THE BACKGROUND.

MIMI Why ever not?

MARGARET Mimi.

MIMI Didn't you want to?

MARGARET No. I was happier without...

FX SCREEN DOOR SQUEAKS.

TOM [BACKGROUND] All done, Miss Whitbread. There's a bit of a mess out the back, but I'll fix that up Friday.

MARGARET Oh Tom! I forgot your tea. Come in and I'll get you a cup.

TOM That's all right. You've got company.

MIMI Don't mind me.

TOM I'm a bit grubby, anyway.

MIMI Well, you don't need to sit down. He doesn't need to sit down, does he
Margaret?

MARGARET Come in, Tom.

FX SCREEN DOOR SQUEAK-SLAM.

MARGARET This is Mrs. Bedlow.

MIMI Mimi, please.

TOM How do you do, Mrs. Bedlow?

MIMI Oh, I'm just fine thanks. That's a lovely voice you have Tom. Did you
receive training somewhere?

TOM No, no. My parents were Welsh. There's a bit of tradition for singing
amongst the Welsh. They're just songs I remember from around our
house when we were growing up.

MIMI Well, there you go. Welsh. Did you know that, Margaret?

MARGARET No.

MIMI You married, Tom?

MARGARET Mimi, for God's sake.

MIMI Oh, lighten up Margaret. Tom doesn't mind. Do you, Tom?

TOM I'm divorced, Mrs Bedlow. About ten years now.

MIMI Divorced? Who's idea was that?

MARGARET Oh, for...

TOM Mutual decision.

Well, I'd better be off. Thanks for the tea, Miss Whitbread. I'll see you
again Friday. Nice to meet you Mrs. Bedlow.

FX DOOR CLOSING HURREDLY, SHUTTING OFF THE NOISES
FROM OUTSIDE. SCREEN DOOR SQUEAK-SLAM FAST.

MARGARET Well, that put the fear of death into him. What did you do that for?

MIMI He loved it. Probably hasn't had that much attention in years. And handsome. There are worse places to break a drought than drinking at that well.

MARGARET Mimi, please, no more.

MIMI He's pretty keen on you as well.

MARGARET He is not.

MIMI He would be, if you showed any interest.

MARGARET Well, I'm not interested.

MIMI In him? Or generally?

MARGARET Mimi, for the last time, drop it. It's too late for me.

MIMI What! It's never...

MARGARET Don't say 'it's never too late.'

MIMI Well, it isn't.

MARGARET It is. It is for me.

Look, Mimi. I'm dying. I haven't been out of this house in four, five years. I should have been dead a couple of years ago, a fact no less irritating to the district nurse than it is to myself.

MIMI But you don't look ill.

MARGARET I don't look well.

MIMI But....dying?

MARGARET You said it yourself. This town doesn't have much of a record for longevity.

MIMI Oh. Well I don't see what difference it makes. It just makes it all the more urgent.

MARGARET What?

MIMI Breaking your drought.

MARGARET Didn't you hear me? I'm sick. I can't go out.

MIMI You don't have to go out.

MARGARET Mimi. Let me make this absolutely clear. I am not interested in any
eleventh hour sexual adventure with whichever Tom, Dick, or Harry
you can think of. Particularly Tom.

MIMI You'd think that....

FX CAR ARRIVING OUTSIDE.

MARGARET Is that a car? It'll be the nurse. Get the door, will you Mimi?

MIMI You know, sex is a remarkable invigorator. Probably add years to your
life.

MARGARET Who says I want to live longer?

FX THE DOOR CLICKS OPEN. A WIND SWOOPS IN AND
OBLITERATES ALL OTHER SOUNDS.

SCENE 3

FX WIND FADES TO BACKGROUND.

VOICE 1 Who's there? Is that you? Have you come back?

VOICE 2 I never left.

VOICE 1 Where are you?

VOICE 2 Here. And not here.

VOICE 1 Help me!

VOICE 2 Did I not say that help was at hand? Listen!

FX FADE UP A SCREEN DOOR DISTANTLY. [REVERB.] IT
SQUEAK-SLAMs REPEATEDLY, AS IF BLOWING IN THE WIND.

VOICE 1 What...What is it?

FX THE NOISE BECOMES CLEARER, LOUDER.

VOICE 1 What should I do?

VOICE 2 Perhaps you should find it.

FX THERE IS ONE LOUD FOREGROUND SQUEAK-SLAM. THE
SOUND CHANGES ON THE SLAM FROM THE PREVIOUS
ATMOS TO THE TWITTERING OF BIRDS IN THE BACKGROUND.

SCENE 4

NURSE Bye bye now, Miss Whitbread. I'll see you next week. Try and get
some fresh air. This weather won't last.

MIMI Pssst!

NURSE Mrs. Bedlow! I thought you'd gone.

MIMI Shh. I parked down the bottom of the drive and walked back up. I
wanted to ask you something.

NURSE Of course.

MIMI Perhaps you could drive me back down?

NURSE Sure. Hop in.

FX CAR DOORS OPEN AND CLOSE. AS THE SECOND DOOR
SHUTS, THE ATMOS CHANGES TO THE INTERIOR OF THE
CAR.
THE ENGINE IS STARTED. THE CAR MOVES OFF.

NURSE Are you not feeling well?

MIMI Me? No. I'm fine. Better than fine. No, it's Margaret.

NURSE Miss Whitbread?

MIMI Yes. Why doesn't anybody call her Margaret?

NURSE Is that what you wanted to ask me?

MIMI No. But, why don't you?

NURSE Miss Whitbread doesn't exactly encourage familiarity, Mrs. Bedlow.

MIMI Well I do. Call me Mimi.

NURSE I'm Jane.

MIMI Jane. Look, I don't know if you're allowed to tell me this but.....well,
how long has she got?

NURSE For what?

MIMI Till she, you know...dies.

NURSE Till she dies? I really couldn't tell you.

MIMI You must have some idea.

NURSE No. Really.

MIMI She told me herself. I just want some idea of...the timing.

NURSE [LAUGHING] Did Miss Whitbread tell you she was dying? Of boredom
maybe.

MIMI You mean she's not?

NURSE Far from it. She's not exactly blooming, but she's healthy enough.

MIMI But why the visits?

NURSE Miss Whitbread is somewhat imaginative about her health. But she's
also a recluse and, I beg your pardon, advancing in years. It's our
policy to check regularly that she hasn't injured herself or fallen ill or
anything like that. I just include her on my usual rounds.
Is that your car?

MIMI Oh yes. I didn't want her to see it, so I parked in the bushes.

NURSE Is that woman waiting for you?

MIMI Sorry?

NURSE Oh, she's gone. There was a woman waiting by your car.

MIMI An old woman?

NURSE Yes, ancient. You know her then?

MIMI No. I've just seen her before.

FX CAR DOOR OPENS. WE HEAR BIRDS TWITTERING. A CAR
PASSES IN THE BACKGROUND.

NURSE Well, don't worry about Miss Whitbread. In fact, if you were planning on visiting her occasionally, it would probably do her the world of good.

MIMI Oh, it'll be more than occasional, I can promise you that.

NURSE Good-o. See you later then.

FX THE CAR DOOR SLAMS. BIRD TWITTERING DISAPPEARS ON
THE SLAM.

SCENE 5

VOICE 1 [FADE UP] Nothing nothing nothing nothing nothing nothing....
You still here?

VOICE 2 Yes.

VOICE 1 Well there's nothing. No door. Nothing.

VOICE 2 I can hear something.

VOICE 1 What? There's nothing. Just echoes....

FX IN THE DISTANCE AN ECHOING VOICE CRYING 'MARGARET!'
OVER AND OVER.

SCENE 6

FX FADE UP CRIES OF 'MARGARET!', GRADUALLY LOSING THE
REVERB. CLOCK BEGINS TICKING SLIGHTLY FASTER THAN
BEFORE.

MIMI Margaret! Margaret! Hello?

MARGARET Mimi.

MIMI Where were you? I've been calling forever.

MARGARET I was resting.

MIMI Well wake yourself up. I'm taking you out.

MARGARET Out?

MIMI That's right. Get some sun on your cheeks.

MARGARET I was in the garden this morning.

MIMI No, I mean *out*. We're going into town.

MARGARET I'm not going into town, Mimi.

MIMI Why ever not? You don't have to walk. I'm going to drive you.

We'll have some tea at the Bakery. Remember Walsh's Bakery?

Well, it's tea rooms now. Lovely scones. And cakes.

MARGARET Thank you for the offer Mimi, but I'd rather not.

MIMI But I told everyone I'd bring you in.

MARGARET What do you mean...everyone?

MIMI Oh all the regular people at the tea rooms. They're all dying to meet
you.

MARGARET Why on earth...?

MIMI Because you're my friend. I've told them all about you.

MARGARET What?

MIMI Nothing personal. Just that you haven't been out in a while, but you
grew up in the town, and went to school there, that sort of thing. And
they asked me what you look like, and I told them you were just
beautiful...

MARGARET Mimi!

MIMI Yes, because you are still beautiful, even if you don't think so. And, I might add, a couple of the fellows were very keen to be introduced.

MARGARET What fellows?

MIMI Fellows that I see there. Gentlemen.

MARGARET Mimi, you haven't done anything?

MIMI Like what?

MARGARET You haven't *arranged* anything? Given anybody the....wrong impression? About me.

MIMI No, goodness no, not exactly, not at all in fact. I just said we might...

MARGARET No, Mimi. No. I'm not going to any tea rooms. I'm not meeting any people.

MIMI But...

MARGARET No.

MIMI But where will we go then?

MARGARET Nowhere.

MIMI Oh we can't sit around here. What about a picnic then? We could take some sandwiches.

MARGARET Mimi, for the last time, I am not going anywhere with you. Not on a picnic. Not anywhere.

SCENE 7

FX A CAR DOOR SHUTS LOUDLY. MARGARET'S HOUSE ATMOS
DISAPPEARS. THERE IS THE HUM OF A MEADOW. COWS.
NEARBY SOUND OF CARS PASSING ON A HIGHWAY. A
SECOND DOOR SHUTS A BIT FURTHER AWAY THAN THE
FIRST.

MIMI [A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY] Look at this! Aren't you glad you came?

MARGARET No.

MIMI [FADE UP] They said it was going to rain. But just look at this weather! The Gorge is just over there.

MARGARET I know.

MIMI You've been here before?

MARGARET Of course. Many times. During the war.

MIMI Oh yes. But what about later? With your fellow. What was his name?

MARGARET Come on. Let's hurry up, eat these sandwiches, and go.

MIMI We have to find a good spot. Here, you take the rug. I've got the basket.

FX LEGS SWISHING THROUGH LONG GRASS. THE HIGHWAY
FADES AWAY. THE HUM OF THE MEADOW
INTENSIFIES. COWS MOO OCCASIONALLY IN THE
BACKGROUND.

MIMI You did come down here, didn't you? With him?

MARGARET [SIGHS] Just once.

MIMI I came here a few times. With Alistair. Before we got engaged. The first time we did it was right along there.

MARGARET Thank you for that information.

MIMI Really Margaret, you're such a prude.

MARGARET Prudishness has nothing to do with it. I'm just not interested.

MIMI I wasn't going to give you a blow-by-blow description.

MARGARET I don't care if you were going to re-enact it for me. I don't really....

FX LOUD MOO CLOSE BY.

MARGARET Aah!

FX MIMI HAS A FIT OF THE GIGGLES AND CAN'T STOP.

MARGARET Mimi!

Mimi, for God's sake...

Will you shut up!

FX WIND BLOWS ACROSS, ERASING THE SOUND OF THE
MEADOW. MIMI'S LAUGHTER RECEDES TO AN ECHO.

SCENE 8

FX WIND FADES OUT. ECHOING LAUGHTER FOLLOWS.

VOICE 1 None of this is real.

VOICE 2 Not entirely.

VOICE 1 Not at all, if you ask me.

VOICE 2 It is a case of deciphering the real from the unreal.

VOICE 1 Uh-huh.

VOICE 2 Like that.

FX FADE UP DISTANTLY THE DRUMMING OF THOUSANDS OF
TINY WINGS. IT BECOMES STEADILY LOUDER.

VOICE 1 What is that?

VOICE 2 Help.

VOICE 1 Not more doors.

VOICE 2 No. Moths.

FX FADE UP DRUMMING TO CRESCENDO.

SCENE 9

FX FADE DOWN DRUMMING TO REVEAL MEADOW ATMOS. NOW
 WITH A FEW BIRDS AUDIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND ALSO.
 THE DRUMMING REMAINS JUST AUDIBLE.

MIMI Look at all the butterflies!

MARGARET They're moths.

MIMI Moths are brown.
 Oh, they're going.

FX DRUMMING FADES ENTIRELY.

MIMI So, what was he like?

MARGARET Who?

MIMI The boy you came to the Gorge with.

MARGARET You don't stop, do you?

MIMI Well, who was he? Did I know him?

MARGARET You don't want to know.

MIMI But I do! I do want to know!

MARGARET For God's sake. He was just a boy from the town. He asked me out
 three times. We went to the pictures each time.

MIMI My first date was the pictures.

MARGARET He liked the cinema. One time we came here afterwards.

MIMI The last time.

MARGARET No. The first time actually.

MIMI So?

MARGARET So what?

MIMI So what happened?

MARGARET Nothing. We didn't see each other after those three dates.

MIMI Just like that?

MARGARET I suppose so.

MIMI What happened to him?

MARGARET I saw him on his wedding day. He was looking at me. Very strange look.

MIMI What was his name?

MARGARET It doesn't matter.

FX FADE UP SLOWLY THE DISTANT SOUND OF TOM SINGING.

MIMI Let me guess. I must have known...

MARGARET Shh!

FX THE SINGING COMES CLOSER.

MARGARET Mimi! That's Tom.

MIMI Why, so it is! Tom!

MARGARET Shut up! What have you done?

MIMI What do you mean?

MARGARET What's he doing here?

MIMI I don't know!

MARGARET What is this? Plan B? If we weren't at the tea rooms, he could find us at the Gorge?

MIMI No! I had no idea...

FX TOM STOPS SINGING. HAILS THEM FROM A DISTANCE.

MARGARET That's enough. Pick up the things. We're leaving.

MIMI But Margaret....

MARGARET You're a stupid, manipulative woman, Miriam Bedlow. That's the truth.
It was true forty years ago when you stuck your nose in my life, and
it's just as true now.

MIMI I didn't.....

MARGARET Shut up. I'm sick of it. Who was he? Who brought you here? What
was his name? As if you didn't know. Alistair, that's who. Your Alistair
who was my Allie first.

MIMI Margaret, really, I didn't want to...I didn't know that you and Alistair...I
swear I didn't...

TOM Miss Whitbread! Mrs Bedlow!

MARGARET Tom. Good afternoon. We're just leaving unfortunately. The sun's
gone.

TOM Oh. The car's going then?

MARGARET What?

TOM The car. The old girl up there told me you'd broken down.

MIMI What old girl?

TOM Up by the car. Must be ninety if she's a day. She knows your names.
Flagged me down on the highway. Said you'd broken down.

MARGARET Well we haven't.
Mimi?

TOM Hello? Where's Mrs Bedlow off to?

MARGARET Mimi!

TOM What's she running for?

MARGARET Oh God, Tom, Mimi didn't invite you to come past here this afternoon,
did she?

TOM What, no. I haven't seen her since that day at your house.

MARGARET Oh God, oh God, I've made a terrible mistake. Excuse me.
[MIDDLE DISTANCE] Mimi!

TOM [BACKGROUND] Do you need a lift or not?

MARGARET [BACKGROUND] Mimi!

SCENE 10

FX THE NOISE OF THE HIGHWAY INCREASES. FADE OUT BIRDS.
THEN MEADOW. THERE IS THE SOUND OF SOME INITIAL
SPLASHES OF RAIN ON THE GROUND.

MARGARET Mimi.

MIMI It's starting to rain.

MARGARET Mimi....I'm sorry. I shouldn't have....

MIMI Did you see her?

MARGARET Who?

MIMI The old woman. I thought she'd be dead. She was so old before. But I
saw her.

MARGARET You know her?

MIMI Yes. Margaret, I'm so sorry. I've done a terrible thing.

FX RAIN GETTING HEAVIER.

MIMI Why did I do such a terrible thing? If I'd known it was you...But I didn't
know. I swear I didn't know.

MARGARET Oh, Mimi. You haven't done anything.
Let's get in the car. You're getting soaked.

FX CAR DOORS OPEN & CLOSE. INTERIOR OF CAR TAKES
OVER. THE RAIN HEAVY ON THE ROOF AND WINDOWS.

MIMI I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MARGARET Don't apologise, please. I should never have told you. I was just being

petty.

MIMI [CRYING] It's not as simple as that.

MARGARET Yes it is. I made my own choices. And I'm satisfied, really I am.

I'm.....happy the way things are.

MIMI You don't know what I did. Please don't hate me. You won't hate me, will you Margaret?

MARGARET Of course not.

MIMI She warned me.

MARGARET Who?

MIMI The old woman. She said there were ways of getting a man to love you. She said I could marry any man I wanted, for a price. I wasn't pretty. I was scared I wouldn't get anyone. So I chose Alistair. I didn't know that you....I didn't even believe really, but she did it.

MARGARET Did what?

MIMI She's a witch, Margaret. A real live witch.

MARGARET What are you talking about?

MIMI Alistair married me because she made him. She made him. With magic.

MARGARET [SPLUTTERS WITH LAUGHTER] Oh, Mimi. You can't be serious.

MIMI It's true. She said she could, and the very next day he called at my house with flowers for me. Proposed right there and then. My dad thought I was pregnant.

MARGARET Mimi, that is the most preposterous thing....

MIMI Is it? What about you? She said there was a price....for interfering with a destiny. Someone would have to bear the cost.

MARGARET Oh, Mimi.

MIMI Don't you see? It was you. She warned me someone would suffer, and I agreed anyway. And now she's come back. I've got to speak to her. What does she want?

MARGARET Mimi, whatever you think you've done, whoever that old woman is, she is not, she cannot be the same woman you knew forty years ago.

MIMI You don't know. It's all coming back to the beginning. Because Alistair's dead now. I thought I was coming back to my childhood. To a happy place. But it was for this. It's all been for this.

MARGARET Mimi. I'm going to take you home now.

FX CAR ENGINE REFUSES TO TURN OVER.

MIMI You see! She knew! I've got to find her!

FX CAR DOOR OPENS. ADD IN EXTERIOR SOUND OF RAIN.

MARGARET Mimi! Get back in the car!

MIMI I'm going to find her!

MARGARET Mimi! Jesus.

FX CAR ENGINE, EVEN DEADDER THAN BEFORE.

TOM [BACKGROUND] Hello!

MARGARET Oh Tom!

TOM [FADE UP] So you have broken down.

MARGARET Tom, it's Mimi. She's upset. She's gone chasing that old woman.

TOM Which way?

MARGARET Over there.

TOM Down the Gorge? Come on then. We'd better catch her before she goes too far.

FX RAIN FADES DOWN UNTIL IT IS A DISTANT PATTERN ON A
CANOPY OF LEAVES. FADE UP MUCH SLOW AND STEADY
DRIPPING ALL AROUND. THERE IS THE OCCASIONAL
HAUNTING CRY OF A BIRD.
SOMEONE PUSHES THROUGH FOLIAGE.

MIMI There you are. I knew it was you. You're exactly as I remember. How old are you? Not that it matters. I saw you by the car. When it started to rain. It was just like the first time, with the rain and everything. Why...Why are you here? Please speak. I don't even know if you are real or not. It was real though, wasn't it? Alistair did marry me. Margaret did suffer. I didn't know....I did know. I knew it all. You told me. Please don't make me tell her! I couldn't stand it. I'm not a bad person. Please say something. It's time to pay up, isn't it? Now that he's dead, I've got to pay up.

MARGARET [BACKGROUND] Mimi!

TOM [BACKGROUND] Mrs Bedlow!

FX FURTHER SOUNDS OF FOLIAGE BEING PUSHED ASIDE.

MARGARET Mimi. Are you all right? Look at you.

MIMI It's over with. I have to tell you....

MARGARET Shh. It's all right.

MIMI No. Margaret. Listen. I didn't choose Alistair. I chose you. You were so beautiful. You had everything. He didn't even matter really. I was so jealous. I just wanted to take...

MARGARET Shh. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter to me.

OLD WOMAN Margaret Whitbread!

MARGARET What...yes?

OLD WOMAN Where are you?

MARGARET I beg your pardon? Tom, if you could just help Mimi...

I'm sorry, I don't know your name...? We're going back to our car.

Perhaps we can give you a lift....

OLD WOMAN Margaret Whitbread!

MARGARET Oh, for God's sake.

TOM Hello again. Remember me? You stopped me on the road up there.

Now, why don't...

FX WIND SPRINGS UP IN THE BACKGROUND.

OLD WOMAN Margaret Whitbread!

MARGARET Oh!

FX WIND BECOMES HUGE. FADE OUT ATMOS BENEATH.

SCENE 11

FX WIND FADES TO MIDDLE-DISTANCE.

VOICE 1 What's happening?

VOICE 2 Things have come to a close. You must leave now.

VOICE 1 I don't know how to.

VOICE 2 Discover it.

VOICE 1 You'll help me?

VOICE 2 How can I help you?

VOICE 1 Show me the way.

VOICE 2 I don't know your way.

VOICE 1 But you brought me here!

VOICE 2 No. I opened the way. You came yourself.

VOICE 1 You must help me!

VOICE 2 Very well. What is your name?

VOICE 1 My name? My name?

VOICE 2 Your name is Margaret.

FX DISTANT ECHOES OF 'MARGARET!' ON THE WIND. THE WIND
 SWELLS UNTIL IT IS THE ONLY SOUND.

SCENE 12

FX FADE UP FOREST ATMOS BENEATH WIND. FADE WIND OUT.

MIMI Margaret! Margaret!

TOM It's okay. She's just fainted. Here, put my coat under her head.

MIMI What did you do to her?

OLD WOMAN I've called her back. She doesn't want to come.

MIMI Back from where? She's here.

OLD WOMAN Part of her is. Part of her isn't. She won't listen to me. She needs
 something to lead her back. Something she knows is real.

MIMI What? What?

OLD WOMAN Something she knows.

FX FADE UP WIND DISTANTLY.

MIMI Tom! Tom, you can sing! She knows your singing.

TOM What? I don't think singing is going to...

MIMI Please, Tom. She knows your singing. She can tell it a mile off.

TOM She's just fainted, Mrs Bedlow.

FX WIND LOUDER.

OLD WOMAN She won't wake from it as easy as you think, Tom Jordan.

TOM How do you know my name?

MIMI Tom, never mind! Please, just do it!

OLD WOMAN Hurry!

TOM It's stupid. I'll feel a fool.

OLD WOMAN You are a fool!

FX WIND REACHES CRESCENDO.

MIMI For God's sake Tom! Just sing!

FX VOICES DISAPPEAR IN THE WIND. FOREST ATMOS FADES
OUT BENEATH.

SCENE 12

FX WIND FADES TO MIDDLE-DISTANCE.

VOICE 1 Where are you?

VOICE 2 I'm here. Listen.

FX WIND FADES TO NOTHING.

VOICE 1 What's happening?

VOICE 2 Listen!

FX TOM SINGING FADES UP DISTANTLY.

VOICE 1 It's singing! Someone else is here.

VOICE 2 No.

VOICE 1 But I can hear them. They're just over there.

VOICE 2 Where?

VOICE 1 Over there. In the forest.

VOICE 2 I can't see the forest.

VOICE 1 It's very dark. But look, just near it, you can see the lights of the town
 through the rain.

VOICE 2 Is it raining?

VOICE 1 Oh, yes. Pouring.

VOICE 2 But who is singing?

VOICE 1 I don't know. It's very familiar though. I can't remember....There's
 someone in the forest. Something's happened. One of them's on the
 ground. They're women. Three women. And a man. It's the man who's
 singing...Oh! Oh, it's Tom! It's Tom who's singing!

FX SINGING STOPS ABRUPTLY. FROM HERE ON, MARGARET'S
VOICE SLOWLY FADES UP BENEATH VOICE 1, SPEAKING THE
LINES SIMULTANEOUSLY.

VOICE 1 & Oh, don't stop. Why has he stopped? They're all looking at the woman
MARGARET lying down. What's the matter with her? Her mouth....she's saying
 something, but her eyes are closed. I don't think she's very... *Who is*
 she? She looks...That's not me!

FX VOICE 1 BEGINS TO FADE OUT BENEATH MARGARET.

VOICE 1 & She looks like me. But she's old. Why am I so old? It's not me. I can
MARGARET see her face like mine, but, old, old. I can see drops of rain running
 along the wrinkles of her face. Why doesn't she wipe them away?

They're doing nothing! They're just standing there. Why don't they help me!

FX VOICE 1 FADED OUT.

VOICE 2 Who are you?

MARGARET That's me. There on the ground. I'm Margaret.

I'm Margaret.

Am I so old already?

SCENE 13

FX SLOWLY FADE UP FOREST ATMOS.

TOM [BACKGROUND] Miss Whitbread?

MIMI [BACKGROUND] Margaret?

MARGARET Yes.

MIMI Are you alright?

MARGARET I'm wet.

FX RAIN INTENSIFIES. THUNDER. FADES OUT SLOWLY.

END